25: Brodrick--106 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 342, 592

"[HD: In Luang Prabang province] you go out into the shapeless streets of straw huts and tall trees, of a European-style house here and there, of spires and steep roofs, of a brand-new royal palace, of bamboo huts on piles with three compartments, two for the public and one sacred to the family."

181 bread by their work, they have scarcely a care for the morrow.
461 Scrupulous observers of the traditions handed down to them by their ancestors, they live an utterly carefree life and instinctively dread everything foreign or unknown to them.

463 Occupations. The men busy themselves with the tasks of farming,
241 fishing and hunting. They are very industrious and skilled farmers, and can draw admirably on the soil's resources. They bring in the water needed for irrigating their rais or mountain ricefields through ingenious
462 canals built along the sides of hills, and they also know how to capture springs, often very distant ones, for the same purpose. To decorticate paddy, they use mills driven by artificial waterfalls. The women perform the household chores, take care of the children, make and mend clothes, harvest and spin cotton, breed silkworms, unwind the cocoons and mill the silk. Theirs also is the task of supplying the home with water and with wood which they gather in the forest, as well as sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, getting in and decorticating the rice. These many tasks leave Thai women and girls little leisure, and it would thus seem only natural that they should profit by a moment of pleasure, whenever one presents itself in the midst of their multiple duties. They do, in fact, go in for fun eagerly and behave as keenly, despite their more reserved appearance, as their Laotian sisters.

361 Houses. There is no difference between Laotian villages and Thai villages, except that the latter are better kept and cleaner.
342 Thai houses are generally longer and higher than those of the
592 Laotians, by reason of the custom which decrees that the whole family--parents, children and grandchildren--shall live under the same roof. Some Thai houses are as much as thirty meters long and from eight to ten meters wide. In rare cases one finds much larger houses which are from seventy to seventy-five meters long and twenty-five meters wide.

342 Thai houses very often have no verandas on their long sides, but always have two, one at each end, which are covered by rounded roofs
554 and serve as reception terraces or antichambers.

The houses of mandarins and notables can be distinguished from the others by the fact that the roof rafters and the trusses of the gables extend above the line of the roof and cross. These members are decorated with wooden silhouettes or scallops ending in discs which, depending on their number and arrangement, indicate the rank of the house's owner.

Meo

516 progresses at an even, elongated pace, carrying as much as 30 kilo-
417 grams in his pack without even seeming to suspect the feats of strength,
[132] suppleness and balance which he accomplishes. As long as he remains on high ground his resistance to fatigue is very great indeed, but he cannot go down to the lowlands without danger, especially in the hot season.

101 Certain authors claim that the word "Meo" which, when pronounced with a certain intonation, means cat in several Indo-Chinese languages, was given to these folk by reason of their agility. However, we must note that in [109] Laotian the word "Meo" used to designate these mountainfolk is neither written or pronounced like the word meo which is used to designate cats. There is the same difference between these two words as there is in French between the words maitre and mètre.

342 A Meo house is built at ground level on slightly leveled ground. The walls are made of puddled clay or of ill-fitting boards, and the house is roofed with thatch or crudely-squared wooden shingles. The doors are made of wood which has been shaped with an ax, and there
[592] are no windows. Often several families live in the same house, and then each has a fireplace to itself and a compartment which serves it as a bedroom. In the common room there is an oven and fireplaces above which objects are placed to dry on a bamboo framework. Behind the house a narrow passageway is left free separating the
[343] building from the sheer mountainside. In front there is a narrow veranda where the horses are kept when they are not housed in a stable built on piles and overhanging the mountainside, as are the animal barn and pig sty, the rice granary and the goat pen. This system has the advantage of protecting the animals from the dampness of the ground, since the planks which form the floor jut out over empty space on their solid piles.

[101] Inside the house there are a few furnishings, as among all peoples
352 of Chinese origin. There are benches, tables, camp beds, dishes,
356 iron and copper cooking utensils and opium smoking accessories, all so repulsively filthy that even the least delicate would hesitate to enter and stay in these hovels, where vermin swarm under the protection of the ancestors' altar.

198 Although amongh themselves and with their families the Meos
212 speak a rather unharmonious language, nearly all the men can understand and speak Qouane-hoa, the language of the Chinese mandarins, which is the official language in Yunnan. They can neither read nor write Chinese characters, and have no system of writing of their own.